MARVEL® 25th ANNIVERSARY



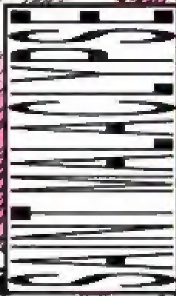
#9 IN A TWELVE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES

THE ETERNALS

75¢ U.K. 40p CAN. 95¢ 9 JUNE

FOR THE PRICE OF A THRONE!

pollard





the Eternals™

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?

THE FABULOUS PARTIES OF SERSI ARE KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND HERE IN A LOFT IN NEW YORK'S SOHO, ONE OF THEM HAS COME TO AN ABRUPT HALT.

COWARDS! TRAITORS! COME BACK AND FACE ME!

YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALM DOWN, IKARIS, YOU HOTHEAD! THENA AND KRO ARE LONG SINCE GONE. YOU'LL *NEVER* CATCH THEM NOW.

THEY WON'T ESCAPE ME *THIS* TIME! THEY'LL FIND EARTH TOO SMALL A SANCTUARY TO HIDE FROM *JUSTICE!*

WALTER SIMONSON - WRITER • **SAL BUSCEMA** - PENCILER • **DANNY BULANADI** - INKER • **RICK PARKER** - LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS - COLORIST • **RALPH MACCHIO** - EDITOR • **JIM SHOOTER** - EDITOR IN CHIEF

ETERNALS™ Vol. 2, No. 9, June, 1986. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly.

THEN I SUGGEST YOU TAKE YOUR JUSTICE, YOUR WARS, AND YOUR POSSE ELSEWHERE AND QUIT SPOILING MY PARTIES.

NEO AND THENA ARE IN LOVE AND *NOTHING* YOU CAN DO OR SAY WILL CHANGE THAT!

I THINK IT'S RATHER SWEET.

BLAST YOU, SERSI!

THENA IS THE *PRIME ETERNAL!* YET SHE HAS BETRAYED OUR PEOPLE AND HER DUTY FOR A DEVIANT! AND *YOU* GAVE HER AID!

MAKKARI, YOU AND THE REST FOLLOW ME TO THE ETERNALS' SANCTUARY OF OLYMPIA.

KARASH!

ONCE THERE, WE'LL BE ABLE TO LOCATE THE FUGITIVES! THIS TIME, THERE SHALL BE A RECKONING!

MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE LOFT...

IKARIS? WHERE ARE YOU?

I BELIEVE HE HAS ALREADY *LEFT* THE PARTY. BUT PERHAPS I CAN BE OF SOME SMALL SERVICE?

DO I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF ADDRESSING MISS MARGO DAMIAN?

YES? OH!!

NO NEED TO BE ALARMED, MY DEAR.

I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOVER, IKARIS, HERE IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.

I DON'T SEE... DON'T SEE... DON'T...

BUT OF COURSE YOU DO, MISS DAMIAN. YOU SEE THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED IF YOU WERE TO ACCOMPANY US TO LEMURIA.

OF COURSE.

EXCELLENT.

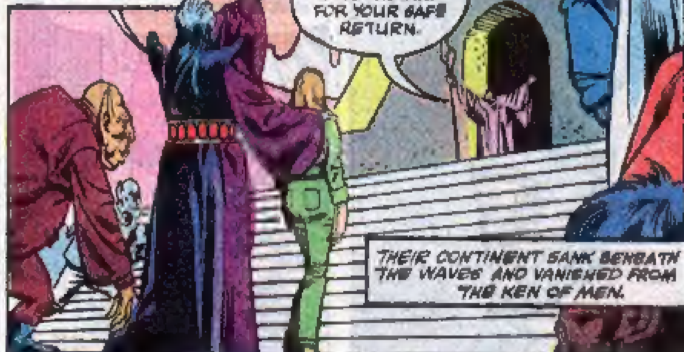
COME, DOGS! WE HAVE FOUND WHAT WE NEEDED! PREPARE OUR SHIP FOR DEPARTURE!

DEEP BENEATH THE PACIFIC OCEAN BASIN LIE THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF A GREAT CIVILIZATION.

IN OLDEN DAYS, THE CITY OF LEMURIA FLUNG HER TENTACLES OUT INTO EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD.



HER MASTERS WERE THE DEVIANTS, AN ANCIENT AND SECRET BRANCH OF MANKIND.



BUT THEY WERE NOT UTTERLY DESTROYED, AND NOW FROM BENEATH THE SEAS, THEY STRIVE AGAIN FOR THE SKIES.















HE MIGHT YET UNDO ALL THAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE MY PLANS REACH FRUITION!

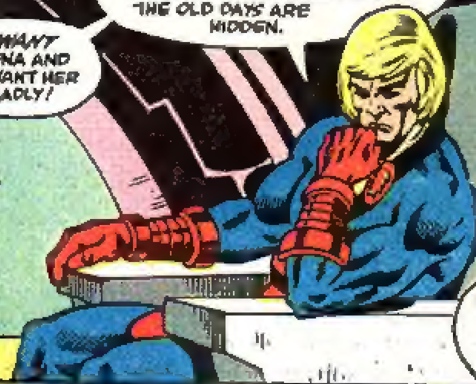
I THINK MARGO DAMIAN WILL SERVE US WELL.

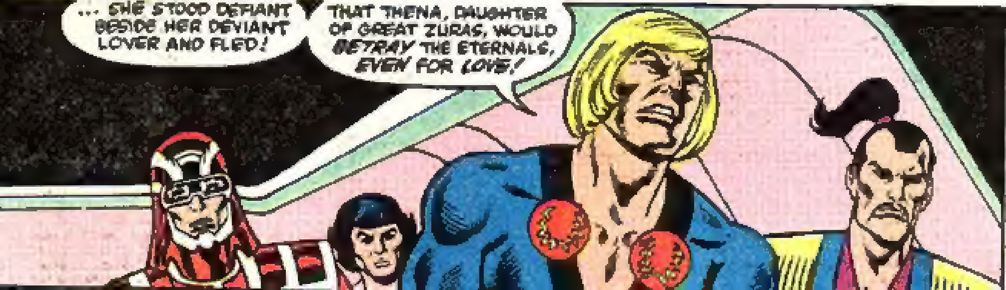
WHAT'S *THAT*? WHO'S *THERE*?

BUT ANSWER THERE IS NONE; THE SHADOW HAS VANISHED AND WHITHER, NO ONE CAN SAY.









I'VE ALREADY ORDERED THE GLOBAL MONITORING NETWORK TO BEGIN SCANNING.

THENA AND KRO ARE SOMEWHERE ON EARTH AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND THEM!

WHAT NEWS, ARGOS?

WE'RE FINISHING THE FINAL SCANNING OF NORTH AMERICA, IKARIS. IT'S OUR LAST RUN OF THE GLOBAL SEARCH.

AND THERE IT IS. NEGATIVE. *NO* INDICATION OF THENA'S ENERGY CONFIGURATIONS ANYWHERE.

COULD SHE BE SHIELDING HER-SELF SOMEHOW? SHE CARRIES THE POWERS OF HER FATHER, GREAT ZURAS HIMSELF.

I WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT SO...

...BUT WE'LL HAVE TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY.

WE DO HAVE AN ANOMALOUS READING IN THE VICINITY OF LEMURIA BUT IT DEFINITELY ISN'T THENA. COULD BE AN AFTER-IMAGE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S DONE, IKARIS, BUT THERE ISN'T A TRACE OF HER ANYWHERE.

IT'S AS IF THE EARTH ITSELF SWALLOWED HER UP!

ELSEWHERE, IN A VAST CHAMBER THAT PULSES WITH THE THROBBING OF MIGHTY ENGINES, WHERE THE FLICKERING LIGHT SPEAKS OF HARNESSED ENERGIES AT WORK...

...TWO FUGITIVES HAVE FOUND A TEMPORARY HAVEN.

THE REFLECTIONS OF ONE OF THEM ARE BITTER.

ONLY A DAY AGO, I WAS THE *MONARCH* OF THE *DEVIANTS!* THE *RULER* OF MY PEOPLE!

I WORE THE CIRCLET OF POWER AND NOW IT IS ASHES IN MY HAND!

NO DOUBT GHAUR IS GREATLY AMUSED OVER OUR FLIGHT. BUT HE'LL LIVE TO REGRET THAT HE DIDN'T KILL US WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE!

I'M MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHERE WE ARE NOW.

MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM. A DEAD TONGUE TELLS NO TALES.

KRO! HE'S UNDER MY *PROTECTION!*

DEAR THENA, HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED BY NOW THAT DEVIANTS ARE A NOTORIOUSLY TREACHEROUS BREED?

THAT IS WHY YOU WOULD SLAY OUR HOST IF I ASKED IT, MY LOVE.

KRO, WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK.

BUT HIS ABSENCE NOW WOULD BE AS GREAT A SIGNAL TO OUR ENEMIES AS HIS DEATH.

KRO?

DON'T BE AFRAID. *I* WILL DO THE THINKING FOR BOTH OF US.

MEANWHILE, IN OLYMPIA...

THESE NOW DESERTED CHAMBERS WERE ONCE FILLED WITH THE LIFE FORCE OF GREAT *ZURAS* HIMSELF.

BUT HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR US ALL. AND NOW WE HAVE TO FIGHT WITH ONLY THE RESOURCES WE HAVE LEFT.

MAY THE GODS GRANT THEY WILL BE ENOUGH.

CURIOUS. 'TIS ZURAS' *PRYSM OF KNOWLEDGE.* AND IT'S PULSING! SOME MESSAGE TRANSMITTED BY THE PRISM STILL REMAINS UNFINISHED! *

UNBELIEVABLE! I HEAR THE VOICE OF GREAT ZURAS HIMSELF COMING FROM THE SHINING BAUBLE!

THERE IS SOMETHING THE NEW RULER MUST KNOW... A DREADFUL SECRET THAT ONE DAY COULD SPELL DOOM...

... FOR ALL THE BRANCHES OF MAN LIVING ON THE EARTH! LISTEN CLOSELY!

*FROM WAY BACK IN *ETERNALS* # 1, FOLKS--MAC-KARRI.

THE PRISM BEGINS TO CORUSCATE WITH RADIANT ENERGY...

...FILLING THE ROOM WITH SIGHTS AND SOUNDS!

BY THE SPACE GODS! THE VISION BEFORE ME CAN BE NONE OTHER THAN THE *GREAT RENEGADE* HIMSELF WHOM THE GODS DID DESTROY!

WHAT UNCHECKED *MADNESS* HAVE I FOUND LOCKED WITHIN THIS CRYSTAL!

"THE GREATEST OF *ALL* CELESTIALS ONCE STRODE ALONE ACROSS THE COSMOS...

"... A SOLITARY GOLIATH WHOSE WAYS WERE AS ENIGMATIC AND MYSTERIOUS AS THOSE OF HIS FELLOW SPACE GODS.

"DURING THE TIME OF THE *SECOND HOST* ON EARTH, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE GREAT CELESTIAL HAD COMMITTED A *HEINOUS* CRIME...

"...A CRIME AGAINST *LIFE* ITSELF

"ONLY FRAGMENTARY RECORDS REMAIN OF THE GREAT BATTLE WAGED BY THE CELESTIALS AGAINST ONE OF THEIR OWN KIND*...

"...BUT IN THE END, NUMBERS PREVAILED.

*AS SEEN IN ETERNALS #18 (OLD SERIES)-- OLD RALPH

"*GREAT* AND *GOLDEN* THE RENEGADE WAS BEFORE HIS FALL... *BLACK AS NIGHT* HE BECAME EVER AFTER.

"A FEW ETERNALS WITNESSED THE INCREDIBLE BATTLE... THEY WERE SWORN TO SECRECY AND HAVE NEVER SPOKEN OF THAT TIME.

"THEN THE RENEGADE WAS SUPPOSEDLY DESTROYED, BUT IN FACT THIS PROVED **IMPOSSIBLE**.

"THEREFORE THE CELESTIALS TOOK SOMETHING FROM HIM AND PLACED IT IN A TINY VIAL, SO THAT HE MIGHT NEVER AGAIN AWAKEN.

"HE NOW LIES BENEATH THE EARTH.

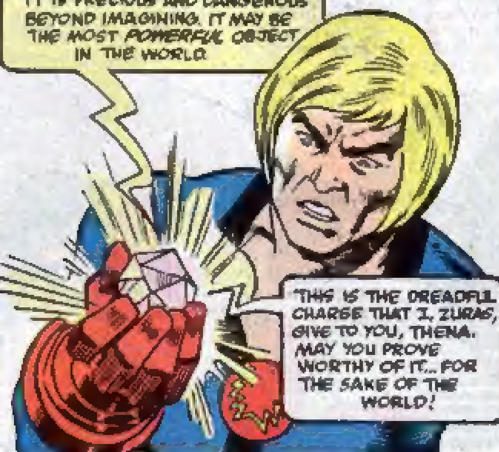
"...WHERE HE *DREAMS* FOR ALL ETERNITY...

"...THAT HE MIGHT FIND *ABSOLUTION* FOR HIS TERRIBLE CRIME.

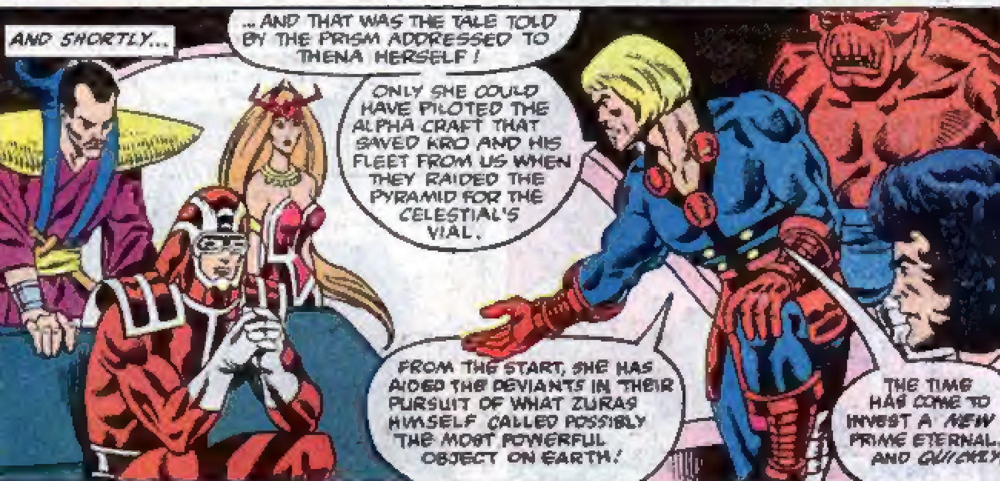
"THE RENEGADE, WHOSE TRUE NAME HAS BEEN OBLITERATED FOREVER, IS SPOKEN OF ONLY AS THE *DREAMING CELESTIAL*...

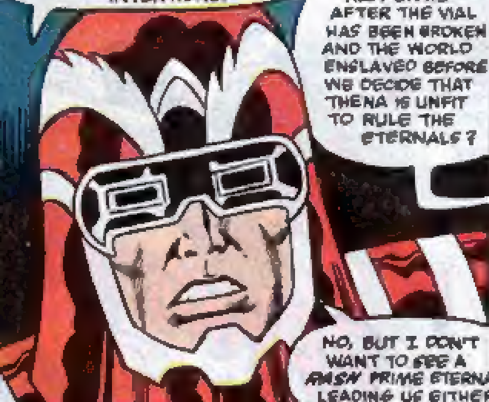
"...AND THEY SAY HIS *HEART* IS LOCKED WITHIN THE PYRAMID OF THE WINDS.

"THEY ALSO SAY THE CELESTIALS TOOK THE KEY WITH THEM WHEN THE SECOND HOST DEPARTED."

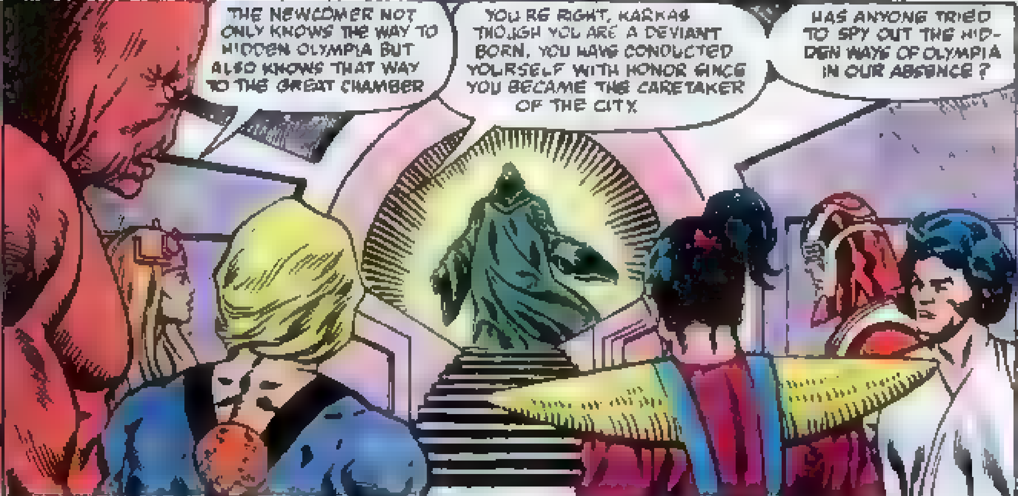
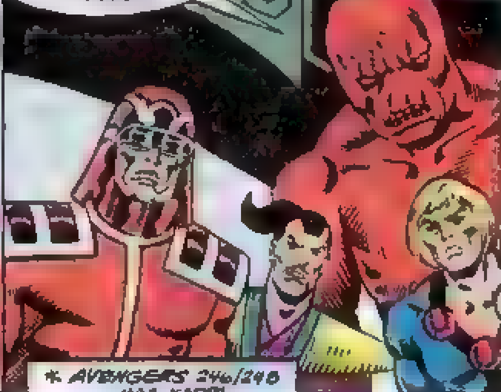
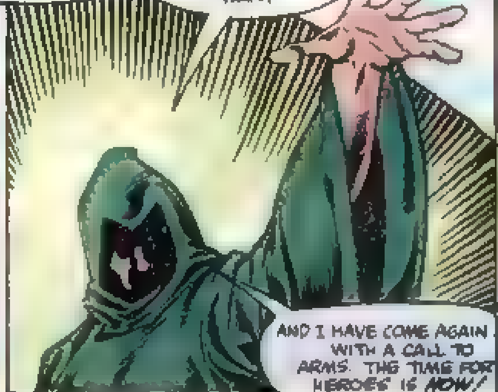

THE ESSENCE OF A CELESTIAL'S LIFE IS HIDDEN WITHIN THE VIAL. IT IS PRECIOUS AND DANGEROUS BEYOND IMAGINING. IT MAY BE THE MOST POWERFUL OBJECT IN THE WORLD.
"THIS IS THE DREADFUL CHARGE THAT I, ZURAS, GIVE TO YOU, THENA. MAY YOU PROVE WORTHY OF IT... FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD!


MAKKARI, SUMMON ALL THE ETERNALS TO THE GREAT CHAMBER. I HAVE FOUND SOMETHING WE NEED TO DISCUSS!
NOW WHAT, IKARIS? ANOTHER WILD GOOSE CHASE?
I HAVE THE PROOF OF THENA'S TREACHERY!
WE'LL BE THERE IN A FLASH!


AND SHORTLY...
...AND THAT WAS THE TALE TOLD BY THE PRISM ADDRESSED TO THENA HERSELF!
ONLY SHE COULD HAVE PILOTED THE ALPHA CRAFT THAT SAVED KRO AND HIS FLEET FROM US WHEN THEY RAIDED THE PYRAMID FOR THE CELESTIAL'S VIAL.
FROM THE START, SHE HAS AIDED THE DEVIANTS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF WHAT ZURAS HIMSELF CALLED POSSIBLY THE MOST POWERFUL OBJECT ON EARTH!
THE TIME HAS COME TO INVEST A NEW PRIME ETERNAL, AND QUICKLY!


THAT COULD BE TERRIBLY DANGEROUS, IKARIS, AND BESIDES, IT'S ALL SO CIRCUMSTANTIAL. WE STILL DON'T KNOW THENA'S INTENTIONS.
BLAST IT, MAKKARI! WOULD YOU PREFER WE WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE VIAL HAS BEEN BROKEN AND THE WORLD ENSLAVED BEFORE WE DECIDE THAT THENA IS UNFIT TO RULE THE ETERNALS?
NO, BUT I DON'T WANT TO SEE A RASH PRIME ETERNAL LEADING US EITHER!

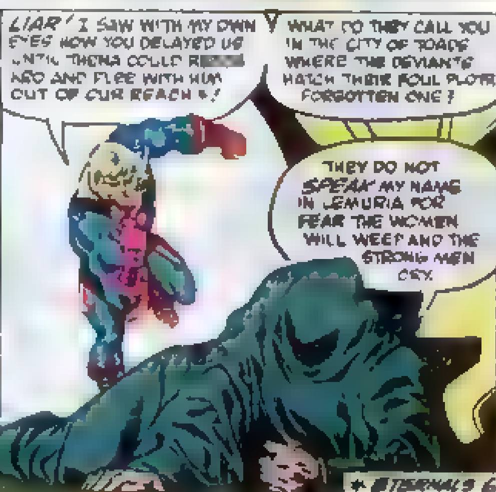

BEEAP! BEEAP! BEEAP!
OUR DELIBERATIONS ARE ABOUT TO BE INTER-RUPTED. A SMALL SHIP APPROACHES OLYMPIA.


THE NEWCOMER NOT ONLY KNOWS THE WAY TO HIDDEN OLYMPIA BUT ALSO KNOWS THAT WAY TO THE GREAT CHAMBER
YOU'RE RIGHT, KARKAS THOUGH YOU ARE A DEVIANT BORN, YOU HAVE CONDUCTED YOURSELF WITH HONOR SINCE YOU BECAME THE CARETAKER OF THE CITY.
HAS ANYONE TRIED TO SPY OUT THE HIDDEN WAYS OF OLYMPIA IN OUR ABSENCE?

NO ONE UNKNOWN TO ME HAS ENTERED THE CITY SINCE THE AVENGERS* WERE HERE
* AVENGERS 246/248 --MAC-KARM

BUT I AM NOT UNKNOWN TO IKARIS. AM I, WARRIOR? NOR AM I A STRANGER TO OLYMPIA.
NAY, I HAVE TROD THESE BYWAYS MANY TIMES BUT ONLY IN TIME OF WAR!
AND I HAVE COME AGAIN WITH A CALL TO ARMS. THE TIME FOR HEROES IS NOW!

YOU! THE ETERNAL WHO DEFIED GREAT ZURAS LONG AGO!
YOU WERE STRIPPED OF YOUR NAME AND EXILED TO THE DARK HALL!
YOU MAY BE CALLED THE FORGOTTEN ONE NOW BUT I REMEMBER YOU AND YOUR DEEDS AT THE PYRAMID OF THE WINDS!

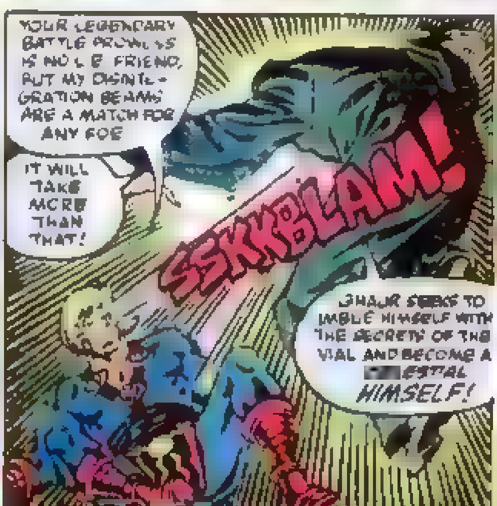
BAKKOOMM

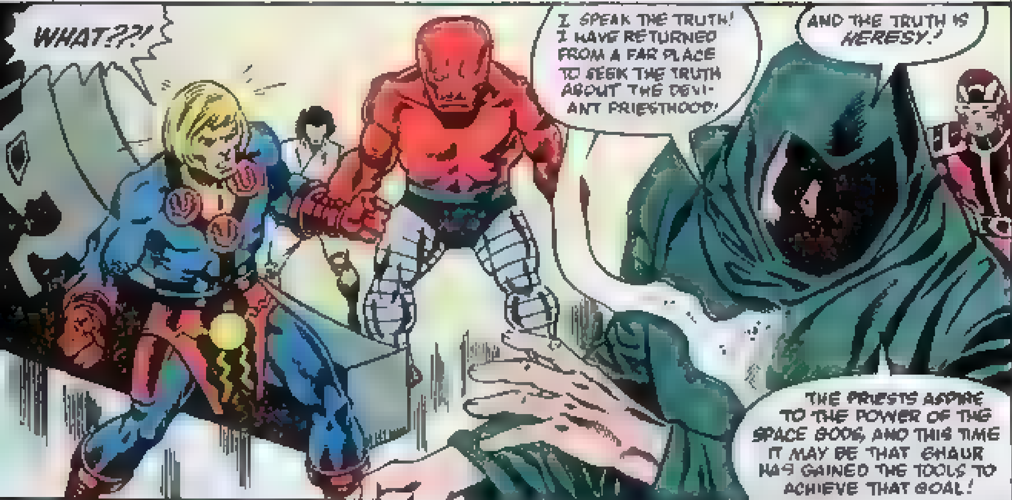

YOU HAVE [redacted] THE TRAITOR!
THRANNG!!
DEVIANT LIAR! THOUGH YOU ARE THE MIGHTIEST OF THE POLAR ETERNALS EVEN YOU CANNOT HARM ME.
AND I HAVE NOT COME TO WAGE WAR BUT TO BRING TIDINGS FROM AFAR THAT WILL SHAKE OLYMPIA'S FOUNDATIONS.

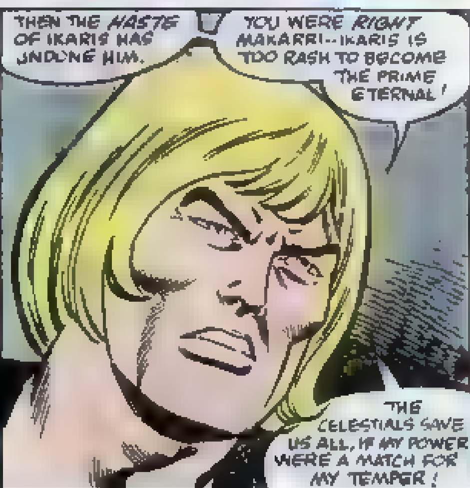

LIAR! I SAW WITH MY OWN EYES HOW YOU DELAYED US UNTIL THENA COULD RE[redacted] ARO AND FLEE WITH HIM OUT OF OUR REACH*!
WHAT DO THEY CALL YOU IN THE CITY OF TOADS WHERE THE DEVIANTS HATCH THEIR FOUL PLOTS, FORGOTTEN ONE?
THEY DO NOT SPEAK MY NAME IN LEMURIA FOR FEAR THE WOMEN WILL WEEP AND THE STRONG MEN CRY.
* ETERNALS 6.

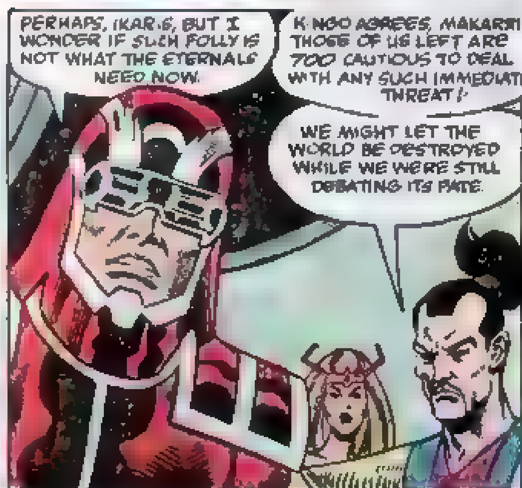

SSKRUNNCH
I HAVE SLAIN MORE OF THEIR KIN THAN ALL THE ETERNALS PUT TOGETHER!

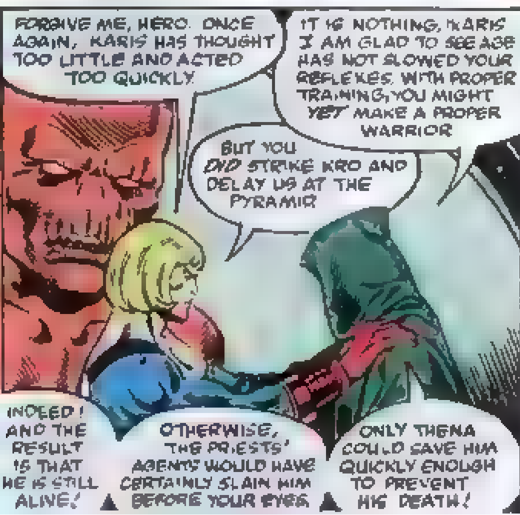

BUT I HAVE WALKED THE BYWAYS OF LEMURIA LATELY.
..AND LEARNED THAT PRIESTLORD GHAUR IS ABOUT TO ATTEMPT TO BECOME MIGHTIER THAN ANY ETERNAL!
KRAK

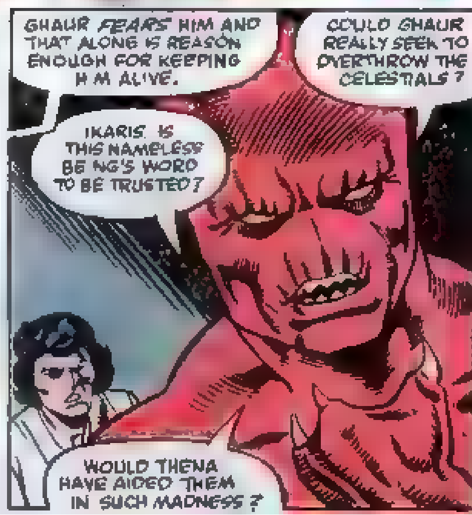

YOUR LEGENDARY BATTLE PROWESS IS NO LIE FRIEND, BUT MY DISINTEGRATION BEAMS ARE A MATCH FOR ANY FOE
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN THAT!
SSKKBLAM!
GHAUR SEEKS TO IMBUE HIMSELF WITH THE SECRETS OF THE VIAL AND BECOME A [redacted]ESTIAL HIMSELF!

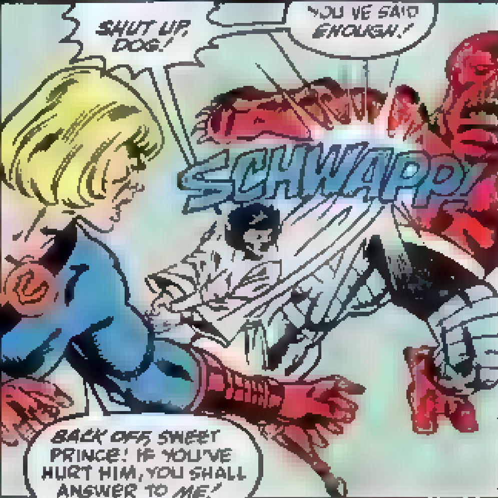

WHAT??!
I SPEAK THE TRUTH! I HAVE RETURNED FROM A FAR PLACE TO SEEK THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DEVIANT PRIESTHOOD!
AND THE TRUTH IS HERESY!
THE PRIESTS ASPIRE TO THE POWER OF THE SPACE GODS, AND THIS TIME IT MAY BE THAT GHAUR HAS GAINED THE TOOLS TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL!

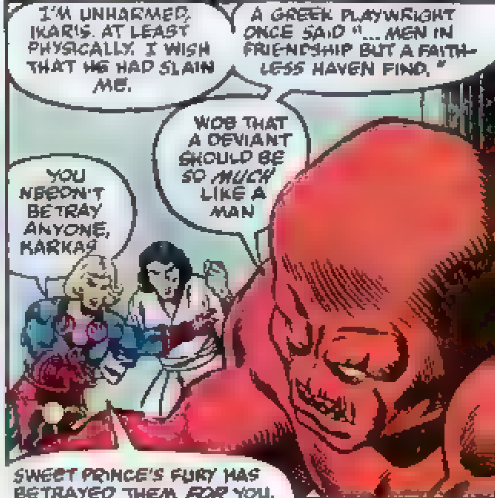

THEN THE HASTE OF IKARIS HAS UNDONE HIM.
YOU WERE RIGHT MAKARRI--IKARIS IS TOO RASH TO BECOME THE PRIME ETERNAL!
THE CELESTIALS SAVE US ALL, IF MY POWER WERE A MATCH FOR MY TEMPER!

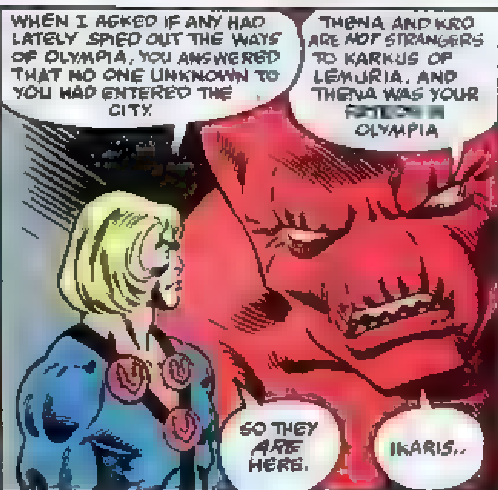

PERHAPS, IKARIS, BUT I WONDER IF SUCH FOLLY IS NOT WHAT THE ETERNALS NEED NOW.
K-NGO AGREES, MAKARRI THOSE OF US LEFT ARE TOO CAUTIOUS TO DEAL WITH ANY SUCH IMMEDIATE THREAT!
WE MIGHT LET THE WORLD BE DESTROYED WHILE WE WERE STILL DEBATING ITS FATE.

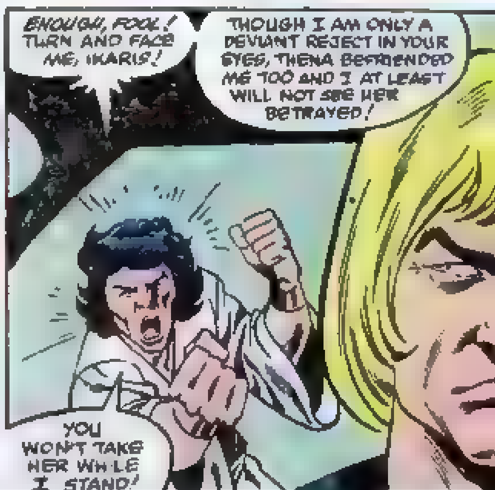

FORGIVE ME, HERO. ONCE AGAIN, IKARIS HAS THOUGHT TOO LITTLE AND ACTED TOO QUICKLY.
IT IS NOTHING, IKARIS I AM GLAD TO SEE AGE HAS NOT SLOWED YOUR REFLEXES. WITH PROPER TRAINING, YOU MIGHT YET MAKE A PROPER WARRIOR
BUT YOU DID STRIKE KRO AND DELAY US AT THE PYRAMID
INDEED! AND THE RESULT IS THAT HE IS STILL ALIVE!
OTHERWISE, THE PRIESTS' AGENTS WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY SLAIN HIM BEFORE YOUR EYES
ONLY THENA COULD SAVE HIM QUICKLY ENOUGH TO PREVENT HIS DEATH!

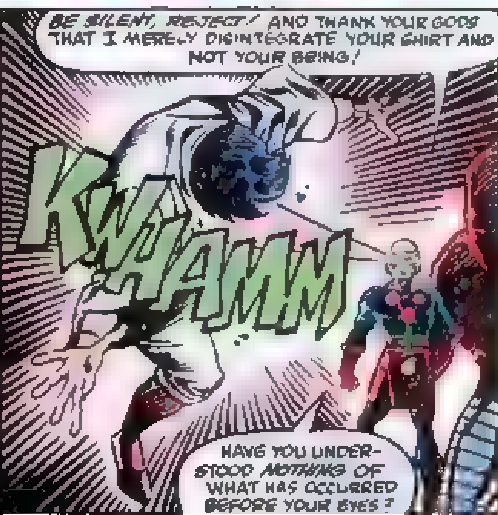

GHAUR FEARS HIM AND THAT ALONE IS REASON ENOUGH FOR KEEPING HIM ALIVE.
COULD GHAUR REALLY SEEK TO OVERTHROW THE CELESTIALS?
IKARIS. IS THIS NAMELESS BEING'S WORD TO BE TRUSTED?
WOULD THENA HAVE AIDED THEM IN SUCH MADNESS?

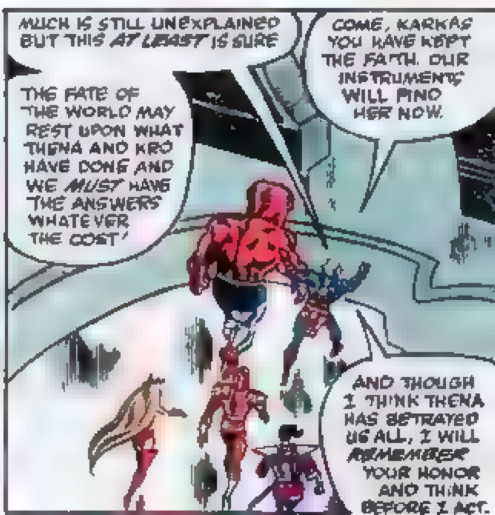

SHUT UP, DOG!
YOU'VE SAID ENOUGH!
SCHWAPP!
BACK OFF, SWEET PRINCE! IF YOU'VE HURT HIM, YOU SHALL ANSWER TO ME!


I'M UNHARMED, IKARIS. AT LEAST PHYSICALLY. I WISH THAT HE HAD SLAIN ME.
A GREEK PLAYWRIGHT ONCE SAID "... MEN IN FRIENDSHIP BUT A FAITHLESS HAVEN FIND."
WOE THAT A DEVIANT SHOULD BE SO MUCH LIKE A MAN
YOU NEEDN'T BETRAY ANYONE, KARKAS
SWEET PRINCE'S FURY HAS BETRAYED THEM FOR YOU.


WHEN I ASKED IF ANY HAD LATELY SPIED OUT THE WAYS OF OLYMPIA, YOU ANSWERED THAT NO ONE UNKNOWN TO YOU HAD ENTERED THE CITY.
THENA AND KRO ARE NOT STRANGERS TO KARKUS OF LEMURIA. AND THENA WAS YOUR [redacted] IN OLYMPIA
SO THEY ARE HERE.
IKARIS..


ENOUGH, FOOL! TURN AND FACE ME, IKARIS!
THOUGH I AM ONLY A DEVIANT REJECT IN YOUR EYES, THENA BEFRIENDED ME TOO AND I AT LEAST WILL NOT SEE HER BETRAYED!
YOU WON'T TAKE HER WHILE I STAND!


BE SILENT, REJECT! AND THANK YOUR GODS THAT I MERELY DISINTEGRATE YOUR SHIRT AND NOT YOUR BEING!
KWHAMM
HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD NOTHING OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED BEFORE YOUR EYES?


MUCH IS STILL UNEXPLAINED BUT THIS AT LEAST IS SURE
THE FATE OF THE WORLD MAY REST UPON WHAT THENA AND KRO HAVE DONE AND WE MUST HAVE THE ANSWERS WHATEVER THE COST!
COME, KARKAS YOU HAVE KEPT THE FAITH. OUR INSTRUMENTS WILL FIND HER NOW.
AND THOUGH I THINK THENA HAS BETRAYED US ALL, I WILL REMEMBER YOUR HONOR AND THINK BEFORE I ACT.

MEANWHILE, IN THE DEEP LEVELS BENEATH THE CITY OF ETERNAL OLYMPIA

ARE WE TO REMAIN HERE FOREVER KRO? SELF-MADE PRISONERS FOR ALL TIME?

OUR TIME WILL COME, THENA WHEN THE PURSUIT THAT DOGS US HAS GIVEN UP, WE SHALL MAKE OUR MOVE

BUT WHAT *MOVE* IS THAT?

NOTHING SEEMS CLEAR ANY MORE.

EVEN THE IDEA OF HIDING IN OLYMPIA TO MASK MY ENERGY CONFIGURATIONS WAS *YOURS*

THOUGH *I* HOLD THE POWER OF GREAT ZURAS IN MY HANDS, I DON'T SEEM TO KNOW MY OWN MIND!

THEN THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE THE POWER FROM YOU, THENA...

...AND BESTOW IT WHERE IT MAY DO SOME *GOOD*!

QUICKLY IKARIS, LOCK THE POWER DAMPERS IN PLACE BEFORE SHE CAN SUMMON HER ENERGIES!

WHAT!?

THEY'VE *FOUND* US! BUT *HOW*--?

KARKAS! I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED*! ONCE A DEVIANT ALWAYS A DEVIANT, EH, DOG?

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE SLAIN YOU WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED!

BE GRATEFUL MY CHARGE IS ONLY TO HOLD YOU AND NOT TO BREAK YOU IN HALF KRO!

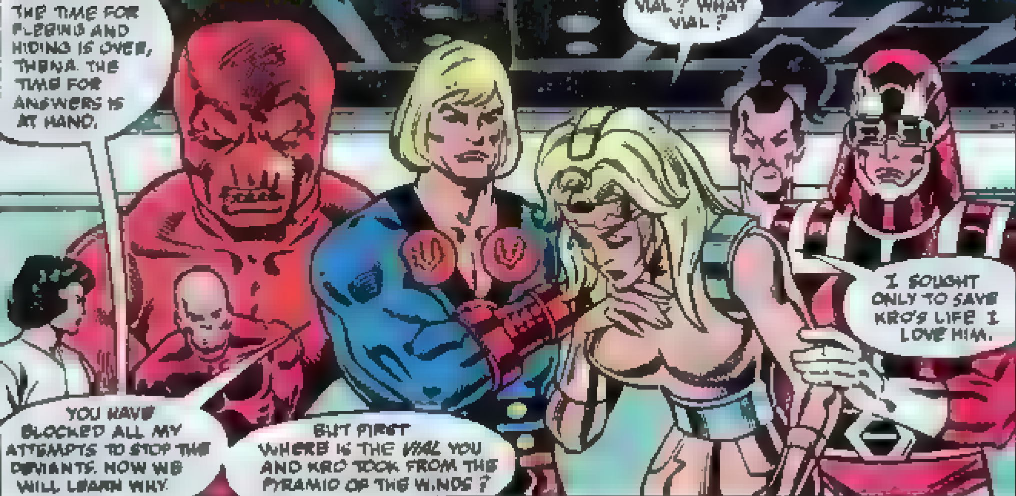
FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO THENA TO MAKE HER OWN PEOPLE TURN AGAINST HER...

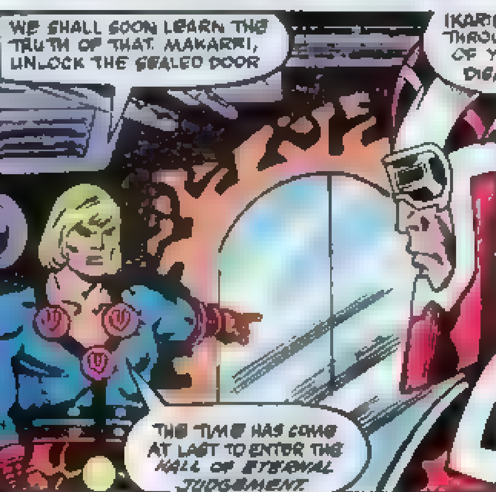
...I WOULD GLADLY TEAR YOU *LIMB* FROM *LIMB*!

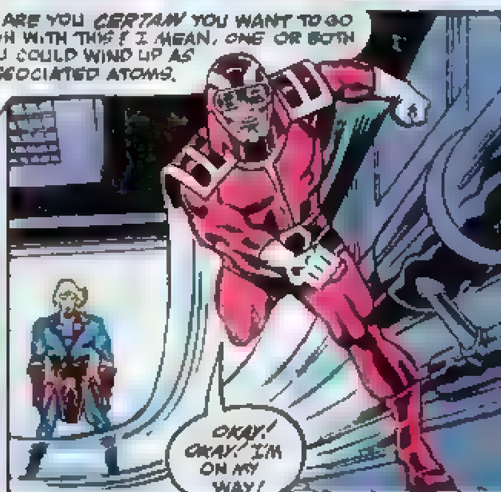
BUT IKARIS SAYS TO KEEP YOU ALIVE

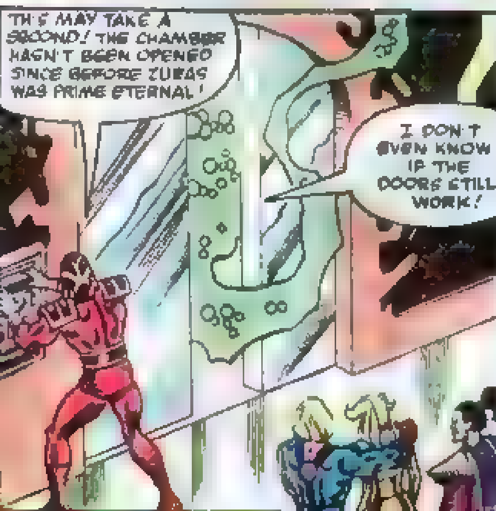
STILL, AS YOU SAY, I AM ONLY A DEVIANT

...AND MAY YET FORGET MYSELF IF YOU GIVE ME HALF AN EXCUSE!


THE TIME FOR FLEEING AND HIDING IS OVER, THENA. THE TIME FOR ANSWERS IS AT HAND.
YOU HAVE BLOCKED ALL MY ATTEMPTS TO STOP THE DEVIANTS. NOW WE WILL LEARN WHY.
BUT FIRST WHERE IS THE VIAL YOU AND KRO TOOK FROM THE PYRAMID OF THE WINDS?
VIAL? WHAT VIAL?
I SOUGHT ONLY TO SAVE KRO'S LIFE. I LOVE HIM.

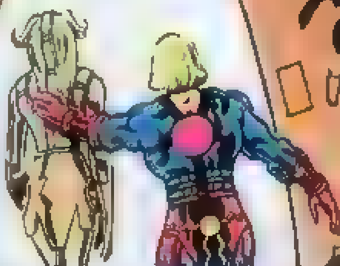

WE SHALL SOON LEARN THE TRUTH OF THAT. MAKARRI, UNLOCK THE SEALED DOOR
THE TIME HAS COME AT LAST TO ENTER THE HALL OF ETERNAL JUDGEMENT.

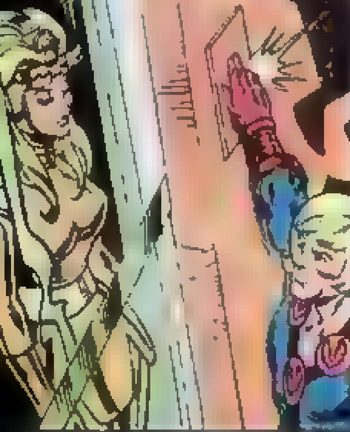

IKARIS, ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS? I MEAN, ONE OR BOTH OF YOU COULD WIND UP AS DISASSOCIATED ATOMS.
OKAY! OKAY. I'M ON MY WAY!


THIS MAY TAKE A SECOND! THE CHAMBER HASN'T BEEN OPENED SINCE BEFORE ZURAS WAS PRIME ETERNAL!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THE DOORS STILL WORK!

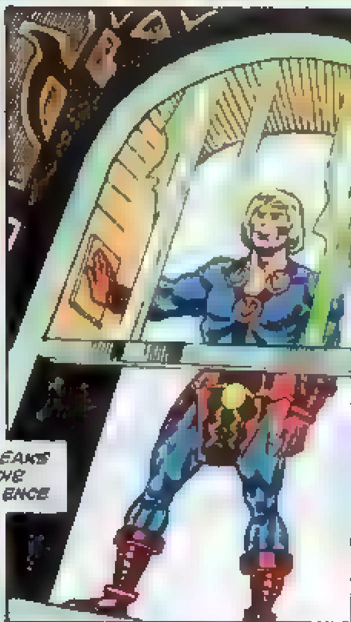

BY THE SWORDS OF MUMAS!!


AND FOR A MOMENT, NOT A WORD IS SPOKEN AS ALL EYES ARE RIVETED BY THE AWESOME SIGHT BEFORE THEM.


WITHOUT A WORD, IKARIS LEADS THENA UP THE STEPS TO THE PORTAL ON THE LEFT OF THE GREAT MACHINE.


WITHOUT A WORD, SHE ENTERS


... AND ONLY A HISSING AS THE PORTALS ARE SEALED...
... BREAKS THE SILENCE




IKARIS! DON'T DO IT! WHO KNOWS WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO YOU IF YOU FAIL!
AT LEAST NOW, YOU'RE STILL ALIVE! WE CAN STILL BEAT THE DEVIANTS!


AND WILL YOU TELL ME THAT KRO HAS NOT LEARNED THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF OLYMPIA IN THE CHAMBERS OF POWER BENEATH THE CITY ?
THE CHAMBERS WHERE SHE WHO RULES OUR DESTINY TOOK HIM!

AND THEN THERE IS NO MORE TIME FOR WORDS AS LIVING ENERGY BEGINS TO FLOOD THE CHAMBER

SLOWLY COALESCING UNTIL SOMETHING BEGINS TO FORM IN THE VERY HEART OF THE PULSING RADIANCE

MY CHILDREN, THINK WELL BEFORE YOU GO TOO FAR

THERE IS A HIGH PRICE TO PAY FOR ANY WHO DARE TO CHALLENGE THE RULE OF THE PRIME ETERNAL.

SHOULD ONE WHO IS UNWORTHY ATTEMPT TO GAIN THE POWER OF ZURAS ..

... HIS REASON SHALL BE TAKEN FROM HIM AND HE SHALL BE DRIVEN UTTERLY MAD UNTIL HE LONGS FOR DEATH.

AND DEATH SHALL EVER BE DENIED HIM.

GREAT ZURAS OR WHOEVER YOU ARE, HEAR ME

IKARIS OF THE POLAR ETERNALS SPEAKS

. AND TODAY, I WILL STAKE MY LIFE AND SANITY AGAINST THE RULE!

THE CHOICE IS MADE!

LET THE MIND GAMES COMMENCE!

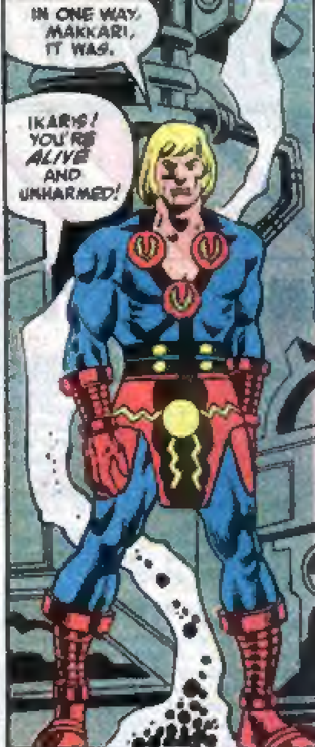
FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, THE WITNESSES BELOW SEE A VISION OF FURY LOCKED WITHIN THE BLINDING ENERGY RELEASED INSIDE THE HALL!

AND THEN THE MOMENT IS GONE, LOST IN A BRIL-LIANCE THAT OBLITERATES EVERYTHING BEFORE IT LIKE A RAGING NOVA!



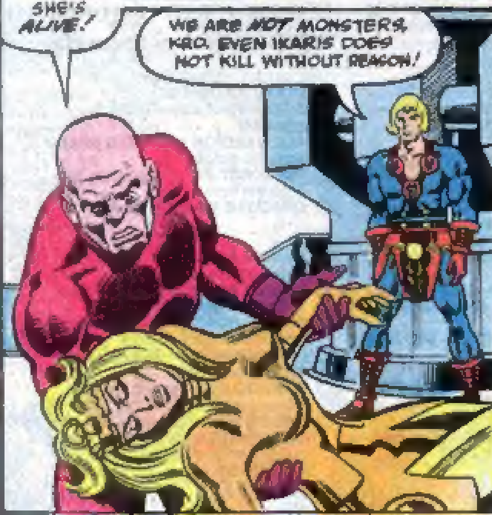



ARE WE... ARE WE STILL IN ONE PIECE?
I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE END FOR SURE!

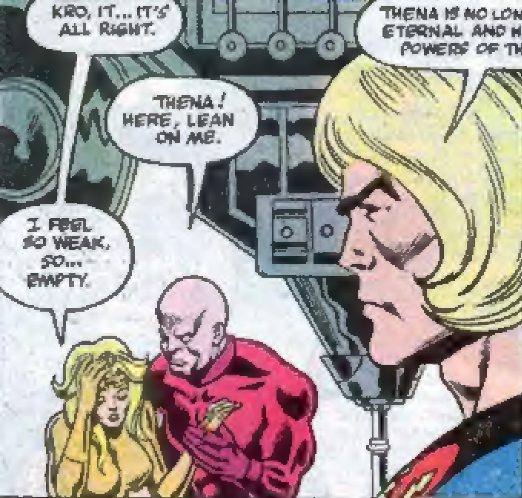

IN ONE WAY, MAKKARI, IT WAS.
IKARIS! YOU'RE ALIVE AND UNHARMED!


THENA! THENA! RELEASE ME, YOU MONSTER!

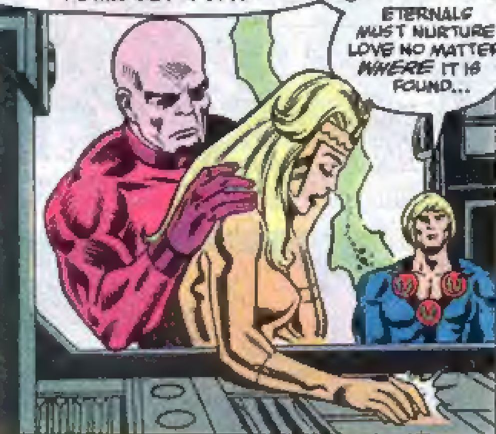

THENA! WHAT HAS HE DONE TO YOU?!

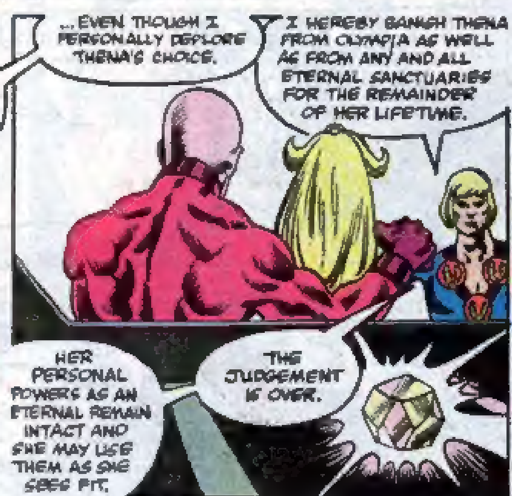

I CAN FEEL HER PULSE! SHE'S ALIVE!
WE ARE NOT MONSTERS, KRO. EVEN IKARIS DOES NOT KILL WITHOUT REASON!


NO! ETERNALS ARE NOT SO FORTHRIGHT! YOU SIMPLY FIND A REASON WHENEVER IT SUITS YOUR RAGE!
SO WHAT HAPPENS TO US NOW? SHOULD WE PLEAD FOR MERCY?


KRO, IT... IT'S ALL RIGHT.
THENA! HERE, LEAN ON ME.
I FEEL SO WEAK, SO... EMPTY.
THENA IS NO LONGER THE PRIME ETERNAL AND HAS LOST THE POWERS OF THAT OFFICE.


SHE FORFEITED HER PRIVILEGES WHEN SHE STOOD AGAINST THOSE SHE SHOULD HAVE STOOD BESIDE.
THE HALL OF ETERNAL JUDGEMENT HAS GRANTED ME THE ROLE OF PRIME ETERNAL NOW.


BUT I CANNOT FIND IT IN MY HEART TO PUNISH THENA TOO HARSHLY FOR ACTING OUT OF LOVE.
ETERNALS MUST NURTURE LOVE NO MATTER WHERE IT IS FOUND...

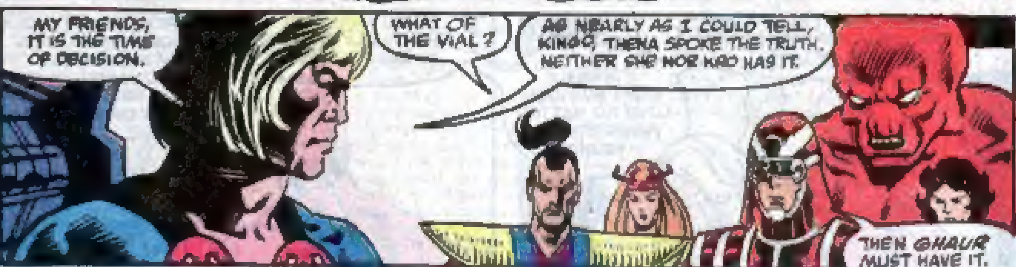

...EVEN THOUGH I PERSONALLY DEPLORE THENA'S CHOICE.
I HEREBY BANISH THENA FROM OLYMPIA AS WELL AS FROM ANY AND ALL ETERNAL SANCTUARIES FOR THE REMAINDER OF HER LIFETIME.
HER PERSONAL POWERS AS AN ETERNAL REMAIN INTACT AND SHE MAY USE THEM AS SHE SEES FIT.
THE JUDGEMENT IS OVER.


THENA?
WE MUST LEAVE, KRO. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR EITHER OF US HERE.


FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS. FAREWELL, IKARIS, PRIME ETERNAL.
MAY THE TASTE OF YOUR NEW FOUND OFFICE NOT TURN TO ASHES IN YOUR MOUTH.
ZZAASSK!







FOR CENTURIES, THE ETERNALS AND THE DEVIANTS HAVE LIVED IN THE SHADOW OF MEN...

...STRIKING A BALANCE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LIGHT.

NOW GHAUR MAY HAVE OBTAINED SOMETHING THAT CAN *BREAK* THAT BALANCE...

AFTER ALL THESE MILLENIA, THE *FINAL SHOWDOWN* BETWEEN THE *DEVIANTS* AND THE *ETERNALS* MAY BE AT HAND!

NEXT

"A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE"!

IN WHICH WE LEARN THE SECRET OF THE FIRE PITS, THE FATE OF MARGO DAMIAN, THE DOOM OF SERSI, AND PERHAPS THE EVENTUAL DESTINY OF EARTH ITSELF!